

April 2009

East Coast Area News



Welcome to the Spring Edition of your MS News. After a very cold spell we are hopefully going to have some warmer weather on the way.

We have had a very busy few months in the office. The "Getting the Balance Right" project has proven to be very popular, we have more information about this research project inside.

We also have an article about our Information Evenings that were run in January and February, we hope that you find it an interesting read.

As always we are interested in getting your input and views for articles in future editions, so please do get in contact with us if you have any suggestions.

Until next time, *The ECA Team*

An Introduction to Tai Chi

On April 22nd we commence an 8 week Tai Chi Programme in the Arklow Bay Leisure Centre, Arklow, Co. Wicklow. ***This programme will be run by Neil Drew*** of Tai Tonics. Neil has over 30 years experience and currently provides a service for Health Care Institutions, Corporate Bodies, HSE and others.

Tai Chi, as it is practiced today, can perhaps best be thought of as a moving form of Yoga and Meditation combined. There are a number of 'forms' (sometimes also called 'sets') which consist of a sequence of movements. Many of these movements are originally derived from the martial arts (and perhaps even more ancestrally than that, from the natural movements of animals and birds) although the way they are performed in Tai Chi is slowly, softly and gracefully with smooth and even transitions. Tai Chi can be practiced either sitting or standing and this course is open to people of all ability levels.

Through the age old principles and application of Tai Chi, Chi Gung and meditation we can learn to flow in harmony and adapt to the changes that life presents to us all. In this way we can live more peacefully and enjoy the lives we are born to live. Information on our Tai Chi class will be posted to all our members shortly.

Please note that if PWMS would like to bring a partner /friend along to the class they would also be most welcome.

Spring Feast 2009

The weekend of 27-29 March were the dates for the 2009 Spring Feast residential weekend which this year took place in a new venue, the Sheraton Hotel in Athlone. The event this year was attended by 66 people from Dublin Kildare & Wicklow. The four star Sheraton Athlone offers improved wheelchair accessible facilities so we were keen to try these out! And we were not disappointed! Feedback from participants indicated that the Sheraton Athlone was a popular choice of venue and that the rooms were spacious, beautifully decorated and more accessible.

The hotel is located next door to Athlone Town Centre shopping complex, which is easily accessed by lift from the hotel. The shopping was a particularly attractive feature for the ladies in our group! The hotel itself has a beautiful spa for those indulging in a little pampering, or for the fitness freaks there is a gym, a lovely pool and jacuzzi area. On Friday night we opened by challenging our participants to a table quiz, followed by some traditional music by a local band who stepped in at very short notice. On Saturday morning participants had a choice of workshops from: Mindfulness; Brain Gym; Archangel Healing and Bach Flower Remedies. Reports indicated that the workshops were stimulating, interesting and provided food for thought!

After lunch there was free time to make use of the gym, pool, have a massage or indulge in a little (more!) retail therapy. On Saturday evening we had a visit from local TD Mary O'Rourke who opened our gala dinner and we were serenaded by a local musician who played a variety of soothing melodies to help create a relaxing atmosphere.

On Sunday morning, the first day of summertime, our closing session was well-known botanist Eanna Ni Lamhna who gave a fascinating talk on wildlife in our gardens.

Notices

Universal Key

To those wheelchair users or their carers who would like free access to disabled toilets, which are generally found in shopping centres, a new universal key is available. The Abloy Universal Key offers those with a disability to access toilets without having to wait for cleaning staff or security staff to unlock the door. The key may be purchased for €14.50 (p&p €10).

Call 01 475 6307 for further details.

Adapted Ford Focus Style 2007 charcoal grey, 1.6 30000kms, hand control, wheelchair hoist, light steering, wheel knob, automatic, 5door, sunroof, new tyres, mint condition €15000 ono.
087 627 1744

Ireland's Paralympic Sports Need You!

Have a physical disability or vision impairment? Want to compete for Ireland at the Paralympic Games? Bring your kit, we want to see you!

ParaLions Athlete Search Day

DCU Sports Complex

Sat. May 2nd, 10am-4pm

Further information is available on www.pcireland.ie

Yoga For Everyone Article – December 2008 issue

The article “Yoga for Everyone” in our December 2008 newsletter had been intended to include a description of the authors as follows: Audrey Williams and Sandra Murphy “yoga teachers trained with Yoga Therapy Ireland who run yoga classes for MS Ireland under the Getting the Balance Right programme” however these lines were erroneously omitted from the final print of the newsletter, along with the reference from “Yoga and Multiple Sclerosis” by Loren M Fishman and Eric Small. A yoga programme developed by Eric Small was the subject of a study published in the peer-reviewed journal Neurology <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2004/06/040610074705.htm> and found that fatigue was significantly reduced in people with MS who followed a yoga programme for six months. The regional team apologise for this omission and any misleading information which may have been caused by it. Audrey Williams was also described as a practitioner of Alternative Therapies, the therapies she practices would be more correctly described as Complementary Therapies and we apologise for any confusion this may have caused.

Information Sessions

During January and February (despite our bad weather conditions and wonderful snow that we all loved for a day!!!) we ran a series of “Information Sessions” at “The Beacon Hotel”, Sandyford, covering the following topics,

- **Fatigue Management**-Marguerite Duggan -St Vincent’s Hospital,
- **Memory Aids**-Joyce Henderson-MS Ireland,
- **Emotional Support**-Mary Ryan- MS Ireland,
- **Meditation & its Benefits**-Aksobhin Tracy- Dublin Buddhist Centre.
- **Employment Rights**-Beverly Webster-Webster Lawlor & Associates
- **Entitlements & Benefits**- Georgina Cruise-Wicklow Citizen Information
- **Diet & Nutrition**-Mary Keogh-Senior Community Dietitian,HSE Dublin Mid-Linster
- **Exercise** –Chandra Panda- Enable Ireland.

A big thank you to all of our speakers and to our participants for feedback on the sessions - here is a sample of some of the positive comments received

- ***A good top up and reminder of things forgotten***
- ***Most interesting four weeks and very enjoyable***
- ***Very informative series overall, certainly worth repeating***

If you wish to obtain a copy of some or all of the presentations, please contact us on **01-2866800** and we will be more than happy to e-mail or post you a copy.

MS World Day: 27th May 2009

Wednesday the 27th of May will be celebrated around the world as the first ever world MS Day. The purpose of the day is to raise awareness of MS, national MS societies and the global MS movement; unite, broaden and mobilise the global MS movement and generate funds to support it. MS Ireland will be using the day to create awareness of MS and the services and supports of the Society. You can get involved locally, regionally and nationally:

✦ **Help us paint the Country Red!** – all over Ireland we are hoping to get as many people out and about wearing our red t-shirts, talking about MS and collecting money to support our services. Check with your local Branch, Regional Office or the National Office for the locations of your nearest 'Big Bucket Collection'.

✦ **Organise your own event** – in your home, school, workplace or community why not organise a fundraising event for your family and friends. A quiz, a coffee morning, a non-uniform day, a race night, a fancy dress or any event you or your friends would enjoy and support.

Register your support on the international website and become part of the global community www.ms-society.ie

Our website will soon have information about the day so keep your eyes peeled!

MS Care Centre: New Service

The MS Care Centre has always been a shining light in MS Ireland's arsenal of services. The beautiful 'home-away-from-home' is a place of peace, relaxation and therapy for all those who have stayed over the years. In a new exciting, venture MS Ireland has introduced the MS Specialist Nurse programme. The innovative programme gives residents an opportunity to speak to the centre's new MS Specialist Nurses and avail of a comprehensive nursing assessment. The specially trained nurses can talk through any issues the person may be having with treatments, symptoms, access to services or any other issues that is impacting on the person's health or quality of life. The aim of the programme is to enable and empower people with MS to manage their own health and interventions.

Lorraine Lenehan is one of the new MS Specialist nurses running the programme and says that it is a great opportunity for people to talk openly about any issues they may be experiencing.

'The programme gives the client the opportunity to have a comprehensive assessment from head to toe'. It gives the resident a chance to ask questions, discuss concerns and allows all the professionals in the Care Centre to work together to address identified issues or concerns. The assessment is totally optional and it is very much lead by the resident. Some residents may just want information about something in particular like continence management; others may avail of the full 2 hour assessment."

Along with the MS Specialists nurse, the centre's occupational therapist, physiotherapist and general nurses form part of the team involved in the programme. This multi-disciplinary team use their collective expertise to assist clients in addressing issues of concern. The team produce a report for clients, which outlines recommendations and possible interventions to improve symptoms.

Respite is the core function of the Care Centre and residents are encouraged to use the centre as a place of rest and relaxation. The MS Specialist Nurse Programme may be a great benefit to residents, but it is optional and residents are free to use all existing services regardless of participation on the programme.

If you would like to learn more about the MS Specialist Nurse Programme call Lorraine Lenehan or Mary Blake, the MS Specialist Nurses, at 01 490 6234.

Keep In Touch

If you haven't done so already, sign up for the MS eNews, our electronic newsletter. Sent to your email inbox every two weeks or so, the email will keep you up to date with developments in MS and MS Ireland. Sign up at <http://www.ms-society.ie/pages/enews-2> If you would like to receive this regional newsletter by email, tick the appropriate box on the eNews sign up page.

Have you checked out our new website? No? Log onto www.ms-society for a look-see.

Fun Raise with Fundraising

MS Ireland have a number of exciting and varied fundraising campaigns on the go at the moment. We'd really appreciate your involvement in all or any events and activities to ensure the money brought in from our fundraising continues to meet the costs of our services. There is something for everyone:

✦ **Raffle Tickets** – For only €2 you could be in with the chance to win a luxury 5 night stay in New York with our national raffle. Sell or buy a book from your local Branch or call Áine in National Office for delivery.

✦ **Mini Marathon** – strap on your runners or oil your wheels and get out on the streets of Dublin for the Flora Mini marathon on the June bank holiday Monday. Call Natasha in National Office today for sponsorship cards and t-shirts.

MS Swim – get out your water-wings and swim or paddle at the MS Swim on Saturday 26th April in the Marian College Swimming Pool, Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4. Call Jane in National Office for more information.

If these events and activities don't float your boat you could get involved in our overseas treks, make a simple donation, join the society or organise your own event for MS Ireland. Get in touch today!

MS Ireland Fundraising Hotline **1850 650 950** fundraising@ms-society.ie

Getting The Balance Right 2008/2009

It is almost one year since "**Getting The Balance Right**" our "Nationwide Activity/Exercise and Health Promotion" programme commenced. In 2008 between September and December we had approximately 55 people linked to interventions, with the 3rd and final assessments completed in January/February 2009.

Our "**Getting the Balance Right**" programme for 2009, commenced in January and is well underway, we have approximately 56 people linked to the following intervention programmes; Physiotherapy, Yoga and Fitness.

The University of Limerick Physiotherapy Department will commence collating the research data the last week of March 2009 and will launch the report in September 2009.

If you have any questions about the project please contact us.

Government Abandons National Carers Strategy

National Carers Strategy has been abandoned and will not be published as promised under Social Partnership and in the Coalition's Programme for Government.

Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin, and Minister of State at the Department of Health Maire Hootor issued a statement stating that it was a "difficult decision" not to proceed with the plan. Ms Hanafin said the economic situation "makes it difficult to commit to major advances in services for carers."

The National Carers' Strategy was to focus on all informal and family carers in the community, covering issues such as income support, healthcare, housing, transport issues and social inclusion. Following an extensive consultation period, which received over 1,000 submissions, the strategy was supposed to be published in 2007.

Olga Estridge MS Ireland Services Manager said: "MS Ireland is extremely disappointed at the news that the Carers Strategy will not be published. Our own research has shown that 67% of carers of people with MS provide care on their own, 76% of carers were providing care for a spouse or partner and 51% of carers provide care for over 45 hours a week. We had hoped that the Carers Strategy would address these and many other issues relating to the experiences of people providing care. It is disheartening to see that cutbacks are affecting some of the most vulnerable in society." MS Ireland took part in the consultation process and presented a submission to the working group in April 2008.

New website www.losingyourjob.ie

Losingyourjob.ie is a new website from the Citizens Information Board which provides information for people who are currently unemployed or working reduced hours. Losingyourjob.ie is based on content from citizensinformation.ie. and includes information on:

- [Working reduced hours or receiving reduced pay](#)
- [Redundancy and leaving work](#)
- [Getting a social welfare payment](#)
- [Money and tax issues, including debt issues](#)
- [Supports available for rent or mortgage payments](#)
- [Options for education and training](#)
- [What you need to know when going back to work](#)

[Leaving Ireland to move to countries inside or outside the EU](#)

If you have a question relating to any of these topic you may wish to contact the Citizens Information Phone Service on lo-call 1890 777 121 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm)

Easi Cab travel service extends service for Wicklow Area

The Easi Cab Travel Club is open to people of all ages with varying disabilities. Their aim is to allow members access to educational, training, sporting, recreational and cultural activities. The Trravel Club is a registered charity based in Bray. They have been providing a service covering North Wicklow and South County Dublin but are introducing a new pilot scheme covering the Arklow / Wicklow area.

- ◆ *Easi-Cabs are accessible and fitted with low steps and a passenger lift or ramp.*
- ◆ *The safety and comfort of passengers are the first priority.*
- ◆ *Drivers are fully trained, offering a professional service.*
- ◆ *It provides one to one assistance and a door to door service.*

To become a member all you have to do is fill out a membership form or ring the travel club coordinator , with your details on 01-276 5488. Members can than telephone the club to make their booking. You are asked to give as much notice as possible of your journey to ensure that Easi Cabs can accommodate you.

Staff are happy to answer any queries and take your booking between 8.30am to 5.15 pm Monday to Friday.

Contact us:

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Unit 10a, The Egan Centre
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Bray
Co. Wicklow

Phone: 01-286 6800
Fax: 01-272 4110
Geraldine Dunne: 087- 2484267
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Calendar of Events April to July 2009

All events will be confirmed by post

- 22nd April** Informal Coffee & Chat-Carers @11am
Avoca Handweavers Kilmacanogue
- 29th April** Informal Coffee & Chat-PwMS @7pm
Stillorgan Park Hotel
- 22nd April-
10th June** Tai-Chi –Arklow Bay Hotel Leisure Centre,
Co. Wicklow- 7.00-8.30pm
- 6th May** Informal Coffee& Chat-PwMS & Carers@11am
Arklow Bay Hotel
- 23rd - 25th
June** Teenagers Adventure Break
Venue to be advised
- 1st July** Informal Coffee & Chat PwMS & Carers @11am
Airfield– **to be confirmed**
- 2nd July** Young Persons Activity Day (8-12 years)
Venue to be advised

The North Wexford Branch would like to extend their deepest sympathy to the Coogan Family, Ballinglen, Co. Wicklow on the recent death of their mother, Mary. R.I.P

Mary and her extended family, including her grandchildren, have been staunch supporters in fundraising down through the years and raised thousands of euro to help support the North Wexford Branch which is very much appreciated.

Mary was a lady who had a smile for everybody and was very interested in hand crafts such as crochet and needle work. She always appeared at our social events in good humour and had a friendly word for everybody. She enjoyed all our events and it was a credit to her family that one of them was always there to care for her. She will be sadly missed by all those who knew her and for her wonderful warm spirit which she shared with everybody

May she rest in peace

Disclaimer: The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of MS Ireland. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, the editor is not responsible for any error or inaccuracy that may occur.